

Courting a Comeback



Lifetime memories help heal amateur player who competed alongside sons in 2007 PGA McGladrey Team Championship

By Bob Denney

Less than a month after the last putt had dropped in the inaugural PGA McGladrey Team Championship, Dennis Belote went under the knife.

The 61-year-old prep basketball coach from East Amherst, N.Y., who had limped while competing with his two sons in the National Championship at Pinehurst, N.C., faced double knee replacement surgery.

The anxiety and resulting pain Belote suffered from the Oct. 4 surgery was eased when he recalled the experience he had with his family, which represented the Western New York PGA Section in the first grassroots best-ball championship conducted by The PGA of America.

“Competing with my sons in that championship was the highlight of my golfing life,” said Belote, who competed with his sons, Scott of Williamsville, N.Y., and Keith of Amherst. “My oldest son (Scott) gets the credit for organizing us into a team. We got into the Section Championship by one stroke and then won by seven (at Chautauqua Golf Club).

“It was a great experience, and we will give it another try this year, hoping we can return to Pinehurst. We all talked about going back with our families even if we don’t qualify.”

The second PGA McGladrey Team Championship is Oct. 20–22, with competition at three of Pinehurst’s premier layouts – Nos. 2, 4 and 8. Local Qualifying events for the 2008 PGA McGladrey Team Championship are conducted Feb. through Sept. nationwide. Facility registration to host an event is currently being accepted online at PGA.com/teamchampionship.

Former Western New York PGA President Tim Fries of Transit Valley Golf Club in East Amherst concurred that the family experience of the Championship was unforgettable.

“To spend time with your members in a tournament setting, to be with them on the road and to be competitive, and to get to play in a national championship, one that The PGA always gets right, is an experience that one will ever forget,”



said Fries. “I’m passing on to all our members who did not first sign up that they cannot believe what RSM McGladrey has done and what they are about in supporting this Championship.”

Dennis Belote, meanwhile, is recovering well after the surgery, having made gains in range of motion for both knees. “Sitting is a real problem,” says Belote, in his 19th season and whose coaching résumé includes guiding the Flames of Williamsville East High School to a Class A state runner-up finish in 2001, along with three Sectional crowns. “My doctor told me that I can’t be out swinging a golf club yet, but I have been able to spend 20 minutes regularly on the treadmill and the stationary bike.”

Belote says that he is seeing a reversal in the traditional parent-child role when it comes to promoting playing the game.

“I used to get them to the golf course as much as I could when they were young, and both boys were good in baseball and basketball,” notes Belote. “Now, they are calling Dad a lot now. They’re looking out for me.”

The PGA McGladrey Team Championship is the result of a partnership between The PGA of America and RSM McGladrey, the Official Accounting, Tax and Business Consulting firm of The PGA of America. RSM McGladrey is the fifth largest accounting, tax and business consulting firm in the country when considered with McGladrey & Pullen LLP (a partner-owned CPA firm). ■

Bob Denney is The PGA of America’s senior association writer

Setting it Straight

The January issue of *PGA Magazine* incorrectly reported that PGA Professionals compete for a \$200,000 purse in the National Championship of The PGA McGladrey Team Championship. PGA Professionals and amateurs share a purse of \$200,000 in prize money and gift certificates.

Dennis Belote of East Amherst, N.Y., (center) is joined by his sons, Keith (left) and Scott (right) in last fall’s PGA McGladrey Team Championship at Pinehurst Resort. Together with PGA Professional Tim Fries of Transit Valley Country Club in East Amherst, they were the Western New York PGA Section Champions.